

performed by the commission as it is currently organized. Similarly, although section 5(a)(3) directs the commission to “plan and develop” its own commemorative activities, the commission may not itself implement such activities because of Appointments Clause concerns. Finally, I also understand that the statute poses potential conflicts of interest problems. In contracting and in selecting an executive staff director and staff members (who will be considered Federal employees), the commission will need to take appropriate actions to avoid such conflicts. My Administration will work closely with the Congress to address these issues in future legislation.

**William J. Clinton**

The White House,  
November 13, 1998.

NOTE: At time of publication, S. 1397, approved November 13, had not yet been received by the Office of the Federal Register for assignment of a Public Law number. An original was not available for verification of the content of this statement.

**Statement on Signing the Economic Development Administration and Appalachian Regional Development Reform Act of 1998**

*November 13, 1998*

Today I have signed into law S. 2364, the “Economic Development Administration and Appalachian Regional Development Reform Act of 1998.” This legislation reauthorizes the Economic Development Administration (EDA) and the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC), which provide grant assistance to help rural and urban distressed areas create economic opportunity and job growth in their communities.

The EDA, a reinvented agency within the Department of Commerce, promotes economic development in distressed communities—communities with unemployment above the national average, low income, or special needs created by events such as natural disasters, military base closures, or defense industry downsizing. Title I of the Act reauthorizes the EDA and tightens eligibility criteria to ensure that the EDA can better

serve the needs of distressed communities, simplifies application procedures, and streamlines statutory authorities by eliminating obsolete programs.

Title II of the Act reauthorizes the ARC. Established by the Congress in 1965, the ARC is a Federal-State partnership providing social and economic support for a 13-State region stretching from southern New York to northern Mississippi. The ARC targets its resources to the region’s most distressed areas. Since the mid-1960s, the region’s poverty rate has been cut in half; the percentage of adults with a high school education has doubled; and the infant mortality rate has been cut by two-thirds.

This Act recognizes that future growth requires improved physical infrastructure, a skilled workforce, an emphasis on creating entrepreneurial communities, the deployment of new technologies for business development, and a concerted effort to make the Nation more competitive in international markets. This legislation also maintains the critical role of local development districts in economic growth.

Reauthorization of the EDA and the ARC represents an important step in my Administration’s efforts to ensure that all parts of America participate in the economic growth that this country has enjoyed over the past 6 years.

**William J. Clinton**

The White House,  
November 13, 1998.

NOTE: At time of publication, S. 2364, approved November 13, had not yet been received by the Office of the Federal Register for assignment of a Public Law number. An original was not available for verification of the content of this statement.

**Statement on Signing the National Parks Omnibus Management Act of 1998**

*November 13, 1998*

Today I am pleased to sign into law S. 1693, the “National Parks Omnibus Management Act of 1998.”

The Act, which passed with bipartisan support in both Houses of Congress, is a major

victory for all Americans who treasure and want to preserve the cultural and natural resources our parks have to offer. The Act contains a number of measures to assist National Park Service operations. This legislation is the first major overhaul of the way that the National Park Service awards concessions contracts in more than 3 decades. It ensures that all major contracts will be awarded through competitive bidding and makes concessions franchise fees available directly to the Park Service to improve the parks. These changes will result in better service to visitors and a better return to the taxpayers.

The Act requires the development of a training program that will allow Park Service employees the opportunity to gain the skills and experience they will need to protect parks. It also allows the Secretary of the Interior to lease park buildings consistent with other park legislation, and it lays out a clear process for the Park Service to recommend areas to be studied for possible inclusion into the National Park System.

Finally, the Act establishes a park "passport," which includes a collectible stamp that provides an innovative way for the public to directly support parks. My Administration will work to minimize any confusion that may result between the introduction of this new parks-only passport and the continued use of the Golden Eagle Passport, which provides access to all public lands.

I commend retiring Senator Dale Bumpers, Senator Craig Thomas, and Representatives Don Young and George Miller for their outstanding work in forging a consensus to bring about the passage of S. 1693.

**William J. Clinton**

The White House,  
November 13, 1998.

NOTE: At time of publication, S. 1693, approved November 13, had not yet been received by the Office of the Federal Register for assignment of a Public Law number. An original was not available for verification of the content of this statement.

## **Statement on Signing the Africa: Seeds of Hope Act of 1998**

*November 13, 1998*

Today I am pleased to sign into law H.R. 4283, the "Africa: Seeds of Hope Act of 1998." This Act, which passed the Congress with broad bipartisan support, reaffirms the importance of helping Africans generate the food and income necessary to feed themselves. It is an important component of my Administration's efforts to expand our partnership with Africa and complements our efforts to expand trade and investment through the African Growth and Opportunity Act, which I hope will be passed by the next Congress.

During my trip to Africa last March, I pledged our continuing support to help reform-minded Africans help themselves. In the area of hunger and malnutrition, I announced the 1998 commencement of the Africa Food Security Initiative, a 10-year effort implemented through the U.S. Agency for International Development to help improve agricultural productivity, incomes, and nutrition for the rural poor.

The Africa: Seeds of Hope Act is another step in fulfilling that commitment and it demonstrates that both the Administration and the Congress are united in pursuit of a brighter future for the people of Africa.

Enactment of this bill comes at a critical time for Africa. At the 1996 World Food Summit, the United States pledged to help meet the goal of reducing malnutrition by half by the year 2015. Despite some recent progress, the percentage of malnourished people in Africa is the highest of any region in the world and U.S. help is greatly needed.

In signing H.R. 4283, I applaud the efforts that many African nations are making to improve the lives of their people. They are strengthening democracy and good governance, reforming economic policies to promote broad-based growth, and attacking diseases such as HIV/AIDS. They are doing a better job of educating their children, especially girls, and adopting improved farming practices. We need to do much more, however, to ensure that Africa and its rural poor